



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE JAN 20, 2014

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** ★★ ★

December 4th Phone Clinic Tips and FAQs

Contents

MLK Day	2
Project Planning	2
Ideas for Projects that can still be planned and implemented for MLK Day.	2
Frequently Asked Project Planning Questions.....	2
Recruiting Volunteers	4
Tips	4
Frequently Asked Recruiting Volunteers Questions	5
Fundraising/ Increasing In-kind Donations	6
Tips	6
Frequently Asked Fundraising and In-Kind Donation Questions	6
Communications & Marketing	7
Tips	7
Frequently Asked Communications Questions	8
Additional MLK Day Resources	9

MLK Day

- Brings people together through service to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., gets people excited and engaged in long-term service, and can bring more people into your service network.
- Engages communities in projects that create long-term, sustainable change on issues.
- Engages citizens in dialogue that raises awareness about local issues and projects that meet critical community needs.

Project Planning

Ideas for Projects that can still be planned and implemented for MLK Day

If you haven't started planning your MLK Day of Service project, it's not too late. Here are a few projects that can be planned with very little time and fall into this year's organizing theme for MLK Day, which is increasing economic opportunity:

- You can distribute information about:
 - [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\) and the Earned Income Tax Credit \(EITC\)](#) to low-income or disadvantaged communities and older Americans.
 - How to prevent foreclosure in communities disproportionately affected. This could also be done as a workshop.
 - [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) to low-income and first-generation college bound students.
 - Fire safety information in communities disproportionately affected by home fires and/or checking for working smoke detectors.
- Host events that help get people find employment:
 - a resume writing workshop
 - an interview skills training
 - a "Dress for Success" clothing drive
- Host an event or distribute information that addresses emergency food needs or long-term food security such as:
 - a [food donation drive](#)
 - sharing information on [eating healthy on a budget](#)
- [Other project ideas](#) might include:
 - Devise craft projects for children in hospitals
 - [Write letters to troops](#)

Frequently Asked Project Planning Questions

1. Where do I start?

Start by visiting [MLKDay.gov](#). There you can locate [webinars](#) and [toolkits](#) with project ideas and planning tips. Once you've created a project, you may [register your project](#) at MLKDay.gov. There are also free [promotional materials available to order](#) to help you share information about MLK Day and your project. If you choose not to create your own project, you can still serve by finding out about [projects happening nationwide](#).

2. What are the requirements/guidelines for establishing an MLK Day project?

There was no limit to Dr. King's fight for economic justice. The general nature of projects involve volunteers executing public service for those in need.

3. Is it more feasible to train/orient volunteers the morning of the event or have preplanned days leading up to the event?

Whether you choose to orient volunteers in advance depends on the nature of your project. In general, orienting volunteer team leaders in advance is best to ensure that they are prepared to share instructions with volunteers as they arrive. Orienting other volunteers on the day of simple projects works fine. However, for complex projects you should train your volunteers in advance.

4. How can we connect the struggles that people faced during the Civil Rights era and now? I would like to show that though some things have improved, many issues remain the same while also identifying new issues that have emerged.

Consider having groups read Dr. King's speeches and discuss the relevance of his words and ideas to situations facing communities and society today. "[Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#)" includes a lot of relevant themes. Have volunteers read speeches in groups of 4-8, then hold whole group discussions on findings. Have participants discuss how to utilize service to address some of the issues still facing communities and how they can organize or get involved in those service activities. The lessons learned from the discussion of the speeches will help to direct service activities.

5. What projects can still be planned that 6-10 year olds and 19-24 year olds can serve in?

Have children prepare crafts or baked goods to fundraising for an organization of their choice. Young adults can participate in races for charity or volunteer in soup kitchens. See MLKDay.gov for additional ideas for [involving kids](#) in service projects. Additional useful ideas, especially for teachers, can be found at <http://www.scholastic.com/MLKDay/>.

6. Where can I find projects to send my volunteers to?

Visit MLKDay.gov to [search for volunteer opportunities](#) near you.

7. What type of projects do colleges and universities do? Is there an educational component that can be combined with the service?

College students can perform any of the service activities found in our [toolkits](#). In the past, college students have held diversity fairs, performed community clean-ups, beautified tarnished buildings, and planted community gardens.

8. What are tips for running a successful food drive?

Talk with your local food bank, they are a great resource for generating ideas and learning the food needs in your area. Choose which foods you intend to collect, identify collection sites, and determine how you will distribute food to those in need. Use a [food drive toolkit](#) to assist your plans.

9. What are successful service project ideas that can be done indoors for people 18 years and older?

Organizing a [fitness event](#) or teaching others to [eat healthy on a budget](#) are good indoor project ideas. [Toolkits](#) for these ideas and more are available on MLKDay.gov.

10. What type of service projects appeal to volunteers 55 years and older (specifically in their 60-70s)?

First speak with your target audience to determine their interests, then develop or identify relevant projects in which they can participate. You can also get ideas from [Senior Corps](#), such as organizing a neighborhood watch or mentoring youth.

11. Where can I access movies about MLKDay that we can watch during our service project?

MLKDay.gov features [videos](#) and you can order the [MLK Legacy DVD](#).

12. What are common challenges and how should they be addressed?

Common challenges include recruiting volunteers, fundraising, and promoting your message. Below, please find tips for addressing these challenges.

13. I am looking for reflection activities that can be done in conjunction with my service project?

For kids, visit <http://www.scholastic.com/mlkday/> and click on the classroom lessons. There, you can find reflection questions for grades 3-8. For adults, see the article "[Renewing America Together: Celebrating MLK Day through Citizen Action Conversation and Service](#)." The [Classroom Conversations MLK Day toolkit](#) is another useful resource for reflection activities.

Recruiting Volunteers

Tips

1. **Clearly explain what you're asking them to do.** Very few people are comfortable showing up to events as volunteers without knowing what they're going to be doing. So, when you recruit someone, tell them the specific task(s) they will be completing and how it will benefit the organization.
2. **Explain the long term impact.** Besides knowing what they'll be doing on MLK Day, potential volunteers may be motivated by the long term impact their efforts will have on your organization, the community, city, etc. Provide the details about the number of youth, adults, veterans, families, etc. that their efforts will help with every hour/day they volunteer.
3. **People recruit people.** Recruiting and developing good volunteers is a relational task. Remember that the use of flyers, bulletins, social media, and even mass media ads must be backed up by a committed team who respond to potential volunteer requests for additional information to motivate people to volunteer.
4. **Announce any incentives early.** If you're having breakfast, lunch, snacks, or t-shirts donated for volunteers, then spread the word. Free food, clothing items, and/or accessories with your organization's logo make volunteers feel appreciated and included.
5. **Let parents know their children are welcome.** Isolate easy portions of your larger project that children can complete so the whole family can participate. If there is no way to directly include children in your project, establish a Children's Corner equipped with snacks, puzzles and games, and trusted attendants.
6. **Be sure to send a personalized thank you!**

Frequently Asked Recruiting Volunteers Questions

- 1. I get lots of inquiries and requests to volunteer at my organization (a food pantry), but I don't have enough activities to schedule everyone, how can we engage more volunteers?**

Schedule a brainstorming session with the organization's staff and a few repeat volunteers to identify things they would like to get accomplished or things that it would be beneficial to implement if staff persons had extra support. One way that a food pantry could utilize large numbers of volunteers is to train volunteers to host food drives around the community for specific items needed by the pantry. When [mobilizing volunteers](#), appoint team leaders to oversee activities so your project will be well managed. Information distribution can also be done in conjunction with activities such as food drives or meal delivery. Information on how to [prepare for disasters](#) and utilizing [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and the Earned Income Tax Credit](#) can be distributed at food drive locations or at your Food Pantry.

- 2. What methods are useful for engaging small towns, rural areas, and/or areas nearly void of minorities?**

Addressing economic injustice is Dr. King's lasting legacy and it is relevant to all communities regardless of size, location, or racial make-up. Consider addressing the issue of poverty in your area and think about what volunteers can do to provide support. In small towns, try to partner with groups that may already be serving community members in need. In rural areas, try to plan service activities in central locations to ensure easy access for potential volunteers.

- 3. How do I engage volunteers that are not interested in volunteering on their day off?**

Dr. King, while he did not act alone, demonstrated the power of an individual to make a difference, and we can all learn from his example. One of the themes of the MLK Holiday has always been to "Make it a Day ON, not a Day off." Mrs. King said that the greatest gift that we could give to Dr. King is to spend the day in service to others.

It may be helpful to make potential volunteers aware of the skills they may gain while volunteering and emphasize the positive impact that their service can have in the community. It is also important to highlight [volunteering as a pathway to employment](#). Studies show volunteers are 27% more likely to find a job than non-volunteers.

- 4. What are good appreciation items for volunteers and organizers?**

Appreciation items might include: the [Drum Major for Service award](#), letters from service recipients, framed photos of your activities, plaques (in-kind donation item), and letters of appreciation from organizers.

- 5. What's a good way to identify volunteer leaders, volunteers, and participants/recipients during a service project?**

Varying colored t-shirts, stickers, and name badges are good indicators and will allow you to quickly differentiate volunteer leaders and other participants.

- 6. How do I reach out to refugee and immigrant populations? What is the best way to recruit these populations for a service project?**

Partner with groups consisting of your target populations--many groups have ex-pat associations. You might also partner with groups that serve these populations, e.g. resettlement agencies. Also, look for immigrant meet-up groups in your area and contact group organizers.

7. How can we promote volunteerism in general through this special focused day?

Kick off a year of service. Host a volunteer fair that allows organizations in the community that use volunteers to have tables with materials and opportunities to serve throughout the year.

Fundraising / Increasing In-kind Donations

Tips

1. **Make a list.** Develop a comprehensive list of the things your organization needs and post them on your website. This page/section of your website can then be posted and shared easily with your contacts via email and on social networks. This gives your supporters a clear entry point to helping your organization. Make sure to let people know how their donated funds or supplies will be used to address a community need.
2. **Create a team.** Set your fundraising goal with a team of friends, coworkers, or club members. A team will help you stay motivated and can help you cover more ground with less resources.
3. **Contact everyone you know!** You will be surprised by the people who give, even if it's only a few dollars, because they like/support your work.
4. **Get creative.** Throw a party, get friends to donate items for an auction or raffle.
5. **Send a personalized thank you.** This may not seem important on the front end, but if you plan to raise funds annually, this is critical. And, even if you won't need their support the following year, it's a nice gesture that goes a long way.

Frequently Asked Fundraising and In-Kind Donation Questions

1. **How should an organization approach a national chain or local business for donations?**
Businesses need to know that their contribution will be a win-win situation. Make sure to talk about and have [written information](#), if possible, about how their contribution will be used and how the project will serve the community. Also be prepared to talk about how you plan to acknowledge the involvement of supporters at the event, in press releases, via social media and in any printed materials.

For national chains, contact the organization's public relations department to discuss the win-win scenario of helping to improve the community and achieving positive press. Let them know their donation will reflect positively on their company. Many national chains have given store managers the authority to make donations, so make sure to speak with them also. Act fast as financial approvals may take time. It is also important to express gratitude when [raising in-kind donations](#). Displaying your gratitude sends a positive message and serves as a building block for future philanthropic support. Be sure to be specific when expressing your appreciation.

2. **Are there mini-grants available at short notice?**

The size and turnaround time of grant funds varies. Deadlines for most MLK Day grants have passed. However, Youth Service America, one of the six national MLK Grantees often posts [grant opportunities](#) on their website. Identifying local supporters, who can assist you with specific project needs (e.g. purchase paint, provide a location for the project) is still a great option.

3. **We are using donation requests as a foundation for financial support of our projects. However, most stores/organizations require 6-8 weeks advanced notice, which means we won't find out whether our request has been approved or denied until very shortly before the event. What should we do for a backup?**

You should come up with a solid Plan B. Branch out to other community organizations that share an interest your focus area and lay the foundation for receiving the in-kind resources or financial support your project needs. Ask your volunteer for donations. Sometimes volunteers are the best source of small backup funding. You might provide a list of needed items on your volunteer sign-up page and ask volunteers to sign up to purchase items and drop off them off in advance of project day. However, start with local groups that may not be your traditional funders.

Communications & Marketing

Tips

1. **Review the goals of your program.** Clearly state your intended impact. This will guide the direction of your service and keep planners on track. Ensure that those participating in your cause share a clear understanding of your mission.
2. **Know how to articulate your mission to your audience.** Working with a diverse body of participants requires varying forms of motivation.
 - The level of service may be enhanced when volunteers have a personal investment.
 - Elected officials may want to be engaged with your organization, project, or cause if they understand how it will improve the communities they represent.
 - Potential funders may be more apt to donate if they understand the impact of your project to its clients or customers.

When you can articulate your cause in different ways to meet the motivational needs of various groups, your participant base will grow.

3. **Notify your local community.** Post fliers in coffee shops, schools, and markets. Engaging those in close proximity will extend the community building nature of your mission. Be sure to have a contact person's information on the flyer.
4. **Use Social media.** Getting your word out on the web can stimulate a viral response to your mission. Take advantage of Facebook and Twitter. The scope of your online influence will surprise you. Ask your followers to share your posts with their networks.

5. **Spread the word.** Face-to-face is our primary means of communicating. Bring up your service mission in daily conversations. Manifest your mission through speech, others will witness your cause and be inspired.

Frequently Asked Communications Questions

1. **Where are free places to advertise?**

Check with your city hall, local businesses, and schools for bulletin boards. Many radio stations also have a community bulletin board they read on the air. Distributing posters, fliers, and using social media are great ways to draw attention to your service activity. Be sure to include the MLK Day [logo](#) on your material.

2. **Where can I access information about my elected officials?**

You can access information about Senators and Congressional representatives at [Senate.gov](#) or [House.gov](#). You can access national and state-level elected officials at <http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>. You can also check the elected official's website for their phone number, office location or email. Let us know who you contact by emailing: governmentrelations@cns.gov. If your elected official cannot attend your project, ask them to issue a proclamation for MLK Day.

3. **What have others done to involve local government in their efforts?**

Inviting an official to speak at your service activity is a common and effective way to involve local government. An official's participation gives them an opportunity to learn more about a project addressing a community need and connect with their constituents. It allows your organization to showcase its work and potentially gain a champion for its cause. You can also ask a local official to share a service announcement about your activity with constituents and the media.

4. **Where can we access media advisory templates, press releases and planning timelines?**

You can access media advisory and press release templates, as well as a media planning timeline and other promotional resources at <http://mlkday.gov/promote/index.php>.

5. **What can we do as a house of worship to help?**

Houses of worship have a number of resources that may be helpful to many MLK Day projects. Among many houses of worship resources include a pool of volunteers and usually meeting space in the form of a hall or basement. Identify a community issue or challenge that your parishioners are interested in and then either create or join a project around that issue. Holding a faith-based community round table is one way to provide social support for community members. The MLK Day website provides an example of a [Faith and Community Roundtable In Support of Veterans](#).

6. **What are ways to regulate liability issues, especially with minors?**

It is important to have waivers and permission slips signed by the parents of any minors who will participate in your project. Schools or other groups helping you to recruit youth volunteers can assist with collecting permission slips by notifying parents about MLK Day projects including field trips and extracurricular activities. The MLK Day website also provides [ideas for involving kids in service](#).

7. How do we ensure our messages have broad appeal across multiple age groups and stand out among many email/social messages?

To ensure that your message has broad appeal across various age groups, test your message among people you know of different ages to get their reactions and adjust your messages based on their feedback. For email messages, use bold headings, color, and bullets, which make messages more readable. Adding a compelling image to the top of your message may also prompt people with preview screens to open your message. For social media, use active and exciting language in your posts. Images and a catchy headline can also garner attention for your posts. If reaching out to the media, MLKDay.gov provides further information for [creating newsworthy projects](#).

Additional MLK Day Resources

- Access [MLK Day Communications](#) resources
- Free [Promotional Resources](#)
- January 8, 2014: [MLK Day Phone Clinic](#)